

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

For Release: **IMMEDIATE**
Date: Dec. 7, 2001

Contact: Fred Hartman
Phone: (919) 733-5612

GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES SAFETY AND SECURITY WEBSITE

Raleigh-- Gov. Mike Easley today announced a new web site to help provide citizens with vital information on current safety issues and the latest updates on North Carolina's security efforts.

The new site can be found at www.ncgov.com under the link "Safety and Security." The site contains answers to frequently asked questions on current health and safety issues, links to other local, state and federal resources, phone numbers and the latest news on all the steps North Carolina is taking to increase security.

"Information is our greatest weapon in the fight against terrorism," Easley said. "I want to make sure that our citizens are updated and informed on any issue that affects their health and well-being."

The site includes topics and links on biological weapons (such as anthrax), agriculture, transportation, water, energy, local and national security, the National Guard, air travel and more.

The site was created by the Governor's task force on anti-terrorism, chaired by Bryan Beatty, North Carolina's Secretary of Crime Control and Public Safety. Easley directed the task force in early September to make a thorough assessment of the State's most immediate security needs.

Based on their initial reports, Easley urged the General Assembly for an immediate appropriation that allows North Carolina to further strengthen security efforts. He signed HB 1471 bill into law on Nov. 8 giving him the authority to draw up to \$30 million from the State's reserves if needed for security.

Easley also signed HB1472 into law on Nov. 28 creating a new category of criminal penalty for certain weapons of mass destruction. Under this bill, anyone who is convicted of developing, transporting, storing or using such weapons will get 20 years to life in prison. If the crime results in death, a mandatory first-degree murder charge will be imposed with the possibility of death. The bill also includes a provision for the conviction of hoaxes, which will bring a minimum of five years up to 15 years in prison.

In addition, Easley has directed National Guard troops to remain on alert throughout North Carolina and to continue providing security at the State's 12 commercial airports. For more information on North Carolina's security efforts, please visit www.ncgov.com and click "Safety and Security."

###